

Preventing Attorney Suicide

Identifying Causes, Exploring Solutions, and Taking Action

60-MINUTE PROGRAM | RESEARCH, REFLECTION & PRACTICAL ACTION

What makes it difficult for lawyers to ask for help? How do we recognize concern in a colleague? What can we do next?

Adam Stivers brings the perspective of a practicing public defender to an evidence-informed conversation about attorney mental health and suicide prevention. Drawing on lawyer research, professional guidance, and personal reflection, this program examines stress, isolation, overcommitment, and the emotional demands of legal work. Participants move from understanding the research to practicing a direct conversation, connecting a colleague with support, and choosing a workplace change that makes help easier to reach.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Interpret key findings on lawyer distress while distinguishing symptoms, thoughts of death or self-harm, and suicide deaths.
- Identify personal and workplace barriers to seeking support, including stigma, workload, isolation, and access.
- Practice recognizing concern, asking directly about suicide, listening, connecting with appropriate help, and following up.
- Choose one concrete workplace action, with an owner, first step, and review date.

AUDIENCE & FORMAT

For attorneys, bar associations, law firms, public defender and other legal offices, and legal workplace leaders. The 60-minute format combines a slide-supported presentation, personal reflection, a fictional colleague-support exercise, workplace action planning, and Q&A. Participants may practice privately in writing; personal disclosure is not required. A participant handout and source references support continued use.

ABOUT ADAM STIVERS



Adam Stivers is an Assistant Public Defender in Winnebago County, Illinois, assigned to Drug Court, Mental Health Court, and Veterans Court, and an Illinois Lawyers' Assistance Program peer supporter. He has presented this CLE for multiple county bar associations, authored "Building Resilience and Well-Being" in the State Bar of Wisconsin's 2023 book *Reduce Your Risk*, and was a featured presenter in the ISBA's attorney-suicide Quick Takes video.

Bring this conversation to your organization.

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